



Faculty of Social Sciences

## **SIMR50, Social Sciences: Fieldwork, 15 credits**

*Samhällsvetenskap: Fältarbete, 15 högskolepoäng*

**Second Cycle / Avancerad nivå**

---

### **Details of approval**

The syllabus is an old version, approved by Graduate School Board on 2020-02-25 and was valid from 2020-08-31, autumn semester 2020.

### **General Information**

This is an elective course that is offered to students within the Master programmes in Global Studies, Development Studies, Social Studies of Gender and Middle Eastern Studies.

*Main field of studies*

-

*Depth of study relative to the degree requirements*

A1F, Second cycle, has second-cycle course/s as entry requirements

### **Learning outcomes**

Upon completion of the course, the student shall be able to:

#### **Knowledge and understanding**

- Demonstrate the ability to identify theoretical, methodological, and empirical knowledge acquired in earlier parts of the student's programme of studies, and reflect on its application and/or advancement through fieldwork;
- Demonstrate a thorough knowledge of and account for the context where fieldwork takes place;
- Demonstrate an understanding and account for the student's positionality as a researcher and how this may enable and constraint fieldwork;
- Demonstrate an understanding and provide an advanced and critical discussion of key approaches, processes and ethics of fieldwork as a method of data collection in the social sciences.

### **Competence and skills**

- Formulate a research topic and write a fieldwork project plan;
- Execute a clearly delimited fieldwork project;
- Demonstrate the ability to access, navigate, and leave the field, collect and compile field data with due consideration for research ethics;
- Discuss and analyse field experiences and findings.

### **Judgement and approach**

- Demonstrate a specialised ability to critically assess the applicability of existing theories, methods, and empirical knowledge to the data collected during fieldwork;
- Demonstrate awareness and ability to critically address the positionality of the researcher and ethical issues that might arise during the execution and after the completion of fieldwork;
- Demonstrate ability to reflect on how knowledge and experiences gained during the fieldwork may inform further academic research.

### **Course content**

The Fieldwork course gives the student an opportunity to spend eight to ten weeks "in the field" and gather data locally, nationally, or internationally (e.g. inside an organisation, within a community, or in a foreign country) in order to answer a research question of interest. The choice of the field is relevant for and guided by the programme of studies (i.e., Global Studies, Development Studies, Social Studies of Gender, or Middle Eastern Studies). During the course, the student is "immersed" in the field continuously engaging in research activities related to the chosen research topic and question(s).

The primary objective of the course is to give an opportunity for the student to collect primary and/or secondary data for a research project, which cannot be otherwise accessed by doing desk research. It is therefore an experiential course, where the student does not acquire knowledge through lectures and seminars, but uses the knowledge acquired in previous courses in the "real" world, and gains new knowledge through this practical experience. The processes of data collection can include:

- Participation observation
- Semi-structured interviews
- Structured interview (e.g. survey)
- Focus-groups
- Work in archives
- Access to publicly unavailable material
- Multi-sited data collection, etc.

As part of the course, the student will receive regular guidance from the course convener on how to design, develop, execute and report the findings of an independent fieldwork study.

### **Course design**

The Fieldwork course consists of three parts: (1) preparing for fieldwork; (2) doing fieldwork; (3) reporting the findings.

The first part of the course (preparing for fieldwork) takes place before the actual fieldwork begins. Through a lecture the student will be introduced to the course requirements and literature, and will be offered guidance on how to develop a fieldwork project plan.

The student will be asked to submit a fieldwork project plan two to three weeks after the lecture. Once the fieldwork project plan is approved by the course convener, it is then formalised in a written agreement between the student and Graduate School. The fieldwork project plan is thoroughly followed by the student and continuously reflected upon as the fieldwork is carried out.

The second part of the course (doing fieldwork) runs in parallel to the fieldwork itself. It aims to encourage the student to constantly reflect on the synergies between the knowledge acquired in earlier parts of their programme of studies and their experiences in the field through four reflection papers.

The final part of the course (reporting the findings) takes place upon return from fieldwork in the form of an oral presentation at a face-to-face research seminar.

The student is to complete 320 hours/8 weeks of research in the field (e.g. contacting informants, conducting interviews, visiting archives etc...). The remaining 80 hours/2 weeks are to be used to complete the course assignments.

Unless there are valid reasons to the contrary, compulsory participation is required in the face-to-face research seminar in which a 15-minute oral presentation will take place. Students who have been unable to participate due to circumstances such as accidents or sudden illness will be offered the opportunity to compensate for or re-take compulsory components. This also applies to students who have been absent because of duties as an elected student representative.

## Assessment

The student's learning progress during the course is assessed through various written assignments:

- a fieldwork project plan;
- four reflection papers.

Two further re-submission opportunities are offered within a year of the end of the course. After this, further reexamination opportunities are offered but in accordance with the current course syllabus.

If a student is unable to show satisfactory progress with research activities during fieldwork, the entire fieldwork period must be re-done and it is the student's own responsibility to organise it anew.

The examiner, in consultation with Disability Support Services, may deviate from the regular form of examination in order to provide a permanently disabled student with a form of examination equivalent to that of a student without a disability.

*Subcourses that are part of this course can be found in an appendix at the end of this document.*

## Grades

Marking scale: Fail, Pass.

For the grade of Pass, the student must fulfil the learning outcomes specified for the course.

At the start of the course, students are informed about the learning outcomes stated in the syllabus and about the grading scale and how it is applied on the course.

## Entry requirements

To be eligible for the course the student must have fulfilled one year (60 credits) of coursework within the Master in Global Studies, Development Studies, Middle Eastern Studies or Social Studies of Gender, including profile courses for the programme amounting to 30 credits and 30 credits of courses in research methods/theory of science.

Oral and written proficiency in English equivalent to English 6/B (advanced) from Swedish upper secondary school is a requirement. International qualifications will be assessed in accordance with national guidelines.

## Further information

It is the student's own responsibility to find a suitable fieldwork project and finance accommodation, travel, and other fieldwork expenses.

An agreement between the student and Graduate School is to be approved by the two parties before the start of fieldwork.

Fieldwork can take place locally (e.g., Lund or Malmö), nationally (e.g., Kiruna), or internationally (e.g., anywhere, except where the Foreign Office recommends abstaining from travelling due to e.g., political or health concerns). Data collection can take place at a public or private organisation (e.g., a national or local archive, an academic department, a research center or institute, a think-tank, an editorial office, school, a social incubator or start-up, hospital, a shelter, a camp, an asylum reception center, an NGO, an embassy, a company, a business, a foundation, etc.) and/or in a particular community or several communities simultaneously (e.g., among indigenous people, refugees, aid workers, diplomats, business people, teachers, doctors or nurses, public officials, etc.) in Sweden or abroad.

## Subcourses in SIMR50, Social Sciences: Fieldwork

Applies from H20

2001 Fieldwork, 15,0 hp  
Grading scale: Fail, Pass